UNITED
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Executive Board of
the United Nations
Development Programme
and of the United Nations
Population Fund

INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision 95/23 of 16 June 1995, the Executive Board merged resources for global, interregional and special activities into one line (1.3), to which it allocated 4.2 per cent of total UNDP resources. The term 'global programme' will be used to refer to all activities covered under line 1.3. The present document contains a framework for the global programme for the three-year period beginning in 199 that emphasizes overall objectives, strategies and main activities. The global programme will be managed by the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS).

2. The global programme is the result of a broad consultation process with various thematic expert groups, selected United Nations partner agencies and bureaux in UNDP. It is founded on the UNDP mission and mandate approved by the Executive Board in its decision 94/14. It is also guided by the global United Nations conferences convened since 1990, which established the major issues and challenges for a new international agenda.

I. THE GLOBAL SITUATION FROM A SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE: RATIONALE FOR A GLOBAL PROGRAMME

3. Even though world income in real terms has risen seventold over the past five decades, well above 1 billion people still live in absolute poverty and poverty is on the increase worldwide. There is the risk that globalization may marginalize large social groups - even entire countries. Open markets, expanded trade, foreign direct investment and new technologies no doubt promote efficiency and overall economic growth, thereby offering opportunities for development. However, survival in the emerging global society depends on knowledge and information - and most least developed countries lack the capacity to benefit from the new generic technologies. While globalization may thus bring long-term gains for the world at large, the gaps between and among countries may grow even wider. Disturbingly, much recent research goes so far as to question the presumed positive relationship between globalization, growth and poverty reduction.

4. A further salient feature of the new global economy is that competition for resources will intensify. The risks for social as well as environmental dumping are real. The natural environment is already subject to increasing threats because of rapid industrialization, motorization, the growth of mega-cities and increased poverty. Although the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) established clear goals for the sustainable management and use of the natural resource base, it did not provide the much-needed methodologies needed to implement them.

5. While the power of large corporations will grow in a globalized world, there will be a corresponding decrease in the influence of Governments, many of which are deeply indebted and unable to balance their budgets. Erosion of State sovereignty, coupled with already weak governance structures in many countries, calls for concerted action to try to improve systems for governance.

6. Despite a relentless struggle to equalize opportunities between men and women, gender inequality remains one of the most persistent disparities within and among nations. With an estimated 70 per cent of the world's poor being women, the feminization of poverty is a reality no one can ignore and where major rethinking and action is required.

7. To make sustainable human development (SHD) a reality, a more integrated approach is required, one where economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability move forward together. In such an approach, UNDP has a special responsibility as well as special opportunities, with its wide field network, to contribute to an integrated framework for development. In view of the complexity of this task, a multidisciplinary approach must be fostered in research and in the development of methodologies, including analytical tools and indicators. The global programme will collaborate closely with academic and other institutions in this undertaking.

II. RESULTS AND LESSONS OF PAST COOPERATION

8. During the fifth cycle, resources available under the former global programmes provided support for strategic global research ($94 million); resources available under interregional programmes provided support for the application of new technologies ($31 million); and resources under the Special Programme Resources (SPR) provided support for the promotion of key thematic areas identified by the Governing Council ($284 million). In-depth evaluations of both the global and interregional programme and of SPR are available.

A. Global and interregional programmes

9. Global and interregional programmes have made considerable contributions towards strengthening the research capacity in developing countries and have supported key research efforts in such varied fields as vaccines and drugs and high-yield agricultural products, benefiting millions of people. For instance, UNDP is among the co-founders of such major international undertakings as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the UNDP/World Health Organization/World Bank Special Programme of Research and Training in Tropical Diseases. A substantial amount of resources have been mobilized through these vehicles and country-level investments redirected in pursuance of their respective goals.

10. The evaluation of the global and interregional programmes further recognized the important contributions several of the projects have made in stimulating a change in the thinking and practice of Governments and development agencies towards a more multidisciplinary approach. The Water and Sanitation Project and the Urban Management Project were particularly cited in this respect. The evaluation report also draws attention to the Sustainable Development Network as an initiative that has been extremely effective in focusing on the centrality of information in empowerment and capacity-building.

B. Special Programme Resources

11. SPR have directly and significantly contributed towards transforming UNDP from being largely a funding organization to becoming an organization that plays a stronger and often leading role in important technical and policy areas within the overarching context of SHD. They successfully spurred innovative and catalytic initiatives in UNDP focus areas, including new programme ideas, new methodologies for involving beneficiaries and development partners, new approaches to development cooperation, and the creative utilization of new technologies. The evaluation further highlights strong evidence of SPR leveraging other resources and institutions in support of UNDP goals, and mainstreaming the issues of the six areas of focus specified in Governing Council decision 90/34.

12. For example, the UNDP-managed round-table mechanism redirected technical cooperation towards people-centred development and mobilized some $500 million for the Lao People's Democratic Republic and over $1 billion for Angola. The handbook and guidelines for environmental management, used in a training programme offered in 115 countries, helped to integrate environmental perspectives into development planning and demonstrated the need for including non-governmental partners in the planning process. SPR further enabled UNDP to make substantive contributions to key global events such as the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. UNDP was also able to take initiatives that show the critical link between health and development in the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

C. Recommendations and lessons learned

13. The global programme will build upon experience gained and lessons learned from the fifth cycle programmes, specifically:

(a) Develop effective development indicators, both for situational analysis and performance assessment;

(b) Continue to experiment, innovate and search for alternative development approaches that are both participatory and interdisciplinary;

(c) Maintain a certain level of flexibility in the global programme to enable it to respond to key emerging issues of broader regional and global significance;

(d) Mainstream gender issues fully in all initiatives undertaken;

(e) Develop activities in a unified framework, based on a few long-term objectives and major umbrella programmes;

(f) Ensure system-wide coherence by developing new activities and implementing them in line with overall regional and country programmes and priorities and in full consultation with all project partners and stakeholders;

(g) Focus globally managed resources on analytical, normative and advisory functions and leave the administration of field-based operational activities to country offices.

III. GOALS AND STRATEGY

14. The global programme aims to:

(a) Advance and advocate for a multidisciplinary approach to development, integrating social, environmental and gender concerns into the macroeconomic framework;

(b) Support country offices and regional bureaux in programme formulation, and facilitate their access to knowledge, best practices, tools and methodologies for SHD;

(c) Address important as well as emerging development issues of broader global or regional significance.

15. At the end of the three-year period, the aim for the global programme is to have contributed significantly towards a development framework that integrates economic, social, environmental and gender concerns. By doing so, the UNDP role in advocacy and as a key partner for Governments in their search for integrated and multidisciplinary approaches to SHD will be strengthened. Also, global programme-supported activities will result in strengthened capacity for SHD at the national level, with an emphasis on approaches to eradicate poverty. Of equal importance, by translating the broad UNDP mandate into practical tools and methodologies, the programme will have enhanced the overall quality of UNDP programming and implementation.

16. The global programme strategy has been designed taking into account (a) UNDP's mandate, the process of consultation and lessons learned; (b) the comparative advantage of a centrally managed programme covering issues of broader global significance; (c) the limited financial resources; and (d) the complexity and scope of issues covered. The principal features of the strategy are:

(a) The main emphasis of the global programme will be to support the development of national policy frameworks, programme strategies, as well as the testing of methodologies, indicators, guidelines and tools which advance SHD goals. The global programme will not manage any operational activities at the field level. Interventions will focus on support and guidance, with occasional testing and piloting of new approaches and demonstration projects in certain countries. The aim will be to build upon experience, tools and methodologies already available as a result of earlier work by UNDP and other institutions;

(b) Owing to the complexity and scope of issues covered, concerted efforts will be made to establish and strengthen strategic partnerships and alliances with a plurality of development actors, drawing on the United Nations system as well as on non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, the academic community and centres of excellence:

- At the request of country offices and the Regional Bureaux, the global programme will support the development of regional and national programmes through programme formulation missions, identification of expertise, with the understanding that actual programme implementation will be financed from other sources;

- The global programme will further undertake strategic research, analysis and advocacy on emerging global trends and on issues related to SHD;

- The global programme will cross-fertilize experiences and lessons at the global and regional levels and facilitate learning and replication of best practices across the globe.

17. Global programme interventions must meet all the following criteria: (a) fall within the UNDP mandate as expressed in decision 94/14; (b) be based on the comparative advantages of UNDP; and (c) add value to country and regional programmes.

IV. THEMATIC FOCUS

18. Global programme activities will be distributed among five broad categories, which are closely interrelated. Gender considerations will be mainstreamed through all activities. The categories are:

A.1.3. Framework and enabling environment for SHD

This category encapsulates several cross-cutting issues of relevance to all UNDP priority areas. It supports follow-up to recommendations emerging from major United Nations conferences and aims at promoting the advancement of an integrated development framework. The following main areas of activities are proposed:

A.1.3.1. Evolve a multidisciplinary approach to development that promotes consistency among economic, social and environmental imperatives;

A.1.3.2. Develop a set of situational, performance and cross-sectoral indicators to measure progress in achieving people-centred, gender-sensitive and sustainable development;

A.1.3.3. Promote the participation of civil society organizations in development by supporting the development of legal and regulatory frameworks aimed at facilitating their operations, advancing strategies for participatory approaches, building networks and providing institutional support;

A.1.3.4. Facilitate the review of progress since the Earth Summit in 1992 in the implementation of sustainable development principles and the integration of poverty eradication strategies with natural resource management; develop and improve related methodologies and guidelines;

A.1.3.5. Develop and expand the Sustainable Development Networking Programme and launch a new programme of action-oriented research, innovative projects and testing of new approaches and partnerships that will enable programme countries to utilize the potential of the generic information technologies in support of SHD;

A.1.3.6. Promote the development of innovative, environmentally sound and appropriate technologies in support of SHD goals;

A.1.3.7. Prepare capacity development modalities and tools, and document best practices in capacity development for poverty eradication, employment creation, environmental protection, gender equality and sound governance.

B.1.3. Poverty elimination and sustainable livelihoods

This category aims at supporting the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development and relevant United Nations decisions, with respect to poverty eradication and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods. The programme is expected to have positive impact on the capacity of countries to prepare, formulate and implement national, cross-sectoral poverty eradication strategies and programmes. The following main areas of activities are proposed:

B.1.3.1. Advance the development of poverty-sensitive macroeconomic frameworks and policies through research and advocacy on the impact of economic reforms on the living standards of the poor. Work will be done in partnership with the United Nations system and research institutions. The programme will also enter into strategic partnerships with selected civil society organizations to address challenges arising from increased globalization;

B.1.3.2. Promote improved methodologies for poverty measurement and monitoring through policy-relevant poverty indicators, development of more cost-effective survey instruments, and wider public access to poverty data and analysis. Work will be done in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, research institutions and NGOs;

B.1.3.3. In partnership with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the International Labour Organization and selected research institutions, the programme will assess social policies and programmes - such as social funds and safety nets - with a view to improving their impact on the eradication of poverty, particularly the feminization of poverty. Selected initiatives addressing rural and urban poverty will also be supported. The programme will further provide support to countries on poverty-relevant health policy and management issues, including health research;

B.1.3.4. Promote strategies for private sector development, employment creation and sustainable livelihoods with high potential for improving the primary incomes of the poor. Focus will be on microfinance and microentrepreneurship promotion, with a special focus on gender equality, through alliances with leading practitioners, donors and in the context of ongoing initiatives such as the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest and on small- and medium-size enterprise development. Similarly, the programme will

assess and pilot test new livelihoods strategies and approaches with a view to develop the programming expertise in this field;

B.1.3.5. In partnership with selected institutions, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and other development partners, UNDP will support capacity-building as well as appropriate socio-economic research to understand better the interrelationships of the HIV/AIDS epidemic with development and the practices required to establish effective and sustainable broad-based responses by Governments and civil society.

C.1.3. Environment, natural resource management and energy

The objective of this category is to help UNDP to fulfil the goals established by UNCED on the management and sustainable use of natural resources and to promote sustainable energy management. The programme is expected to have positive impact on the capacity of countries to conceive and implement environmentally sustainable development programmes. The following main areas of activities are proposed:

C.1.3.1. Increase capacity at the national level to develop and implement sustainable energy, environment and natural resource management programmes through the establishment of resource networks, training and fellowships, leadership and exchange programmes, strengthening the network of sustainable development advisers, testing of new approaches and strategic development in new areas;

C.1.3.2. Develop innovative and gender-integrated approaches to achieve food security through sustainable agriculture. Emphasis will be put on capacity-building and strategic development as well as on the demonstration of best practices through a network approach. A second component aims at a reinvigorated relationship with CGIAR;

C.1.3.3. Support national efforts and share best practices in sustainable water management while recognizing freshwater, coastal and marine environments as a management continuum. Activities include capacity-building; support to the Global Water Partnership; support to water management in drylands areas; and support to a new Strategic Initiative for Ocean and Coastal Area Management;

C.1.3.4. Support efforts to build national capacity for the formulation and implementation of national forest programmes that end destruction of forests and ensure sustainable use of forest resources, mainly through the Forest Capacity Programme and Forest Partnership Agreements. Support will further be given to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests;

C.1.3.5. Reorient conventional energy approaches towards sustainable energy, making energy services an instrument of socio-economic development. More specifically, the programme will assist country offices in implementing sustainable energy concepts, i.e., promoting technologies as well as the necessary legal and institutional frameworks for energy efficiency and renewable energy; build global partnerships for sustainable energy; and continue

cooperation with the World Bank on sustainable energy through the Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme;

C.1.3.6. Strengthen the information base on which decisions on sustainable development are made, through the preparation of substantive reports, organization of conferences and seminar series on poverty, gender and environment, as well as support to the World Resources Report. Another component relates to the development of a programme on environmental economics and indicators of sustainable development for use at the country level.

D.1.3. Advancement of women and gender equity

This category seeks to build capacity for the effective implementation of the mandate of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The programme is expected to build better partnerships with women and to develop capacity to integrate gender systematically into development programmes and legal and policy frameworks. The following main areas of activities are proposed:

D.1.3.1. Build capacity of national institutions to undertake gender socio-economic policy analysis and prepare legal and policy frameworks that take full account of gender. A second programme component will develop gender macroeconomic and poverty indicators that will be used to integrate gender analysis into national poverty eradication strategies;

D.1.3.2. Strengthen national capacities for gender-integrated programme formulation, design and monitoring, focusing on selected countries of experimentation. The programme will further promote gender research and learning networks with a view to improving access to knowledge and expertise and for the exchange of best practices. Activities will be developed in collaboration with Joint Consultative Group on Policy partners;

D.1.3.3. Provide support to the resident coordinator system for integrated conference follow-up in collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening women in decision-making processes and enhancing women's access to economic resources.

E.1.3. Management development and governance

The objective of this category is to contribute to national capacity development for sound governance in support of the four focus areas of UNDP. The programme is expected to have positive effects on the design and diffusion of sound systems of governance for poverty eradication and on strengthening UNDP capacity and visibility in governance for people-centred development. The following main areas of activities are proposed:

E.1.3.1. In partnership with organizations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, develop, test and disseminate country-specific approaches to strengthening capacity of executive organs, parliaments and judiciaries for sound governance. In addition, provide

assistance to countries in designing and implementing governance programmes for poverty eradication;

E.1.3.2. Support national projects that focus on furthering decentralization and local governance. Drawing on this experience, develop instruments and approaches to strengthen capacities for the decentralization of planning, resources and implementation, and research the relationship between aspects of decentralization and poverty eradication. Activities will be carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the World Health Organization, universities in developed and developing countries and NGO networks;

E.1.3.3. In the area of public sector management and accountability, develop and test approaches to strengthen national capacity for economic and financial management, particularly debt management and trade, more transparent and effective aid management and accountability, and civil service reform, including gender participation. In conjunction with the above, provide support to country-anchored public sector management projects in support of national poverty alleviation strategies. Natural partners will include UNCTAD, the World Bank and the Department of Development Support and Management Services;

E.1.3.4. Focusing on urban management, document and disseminate knowledge on critical issues associated with the environment, gender, transportation and energy use, poverty, and governance in urban areas leading to city-wide action plans and investments. Principal partners for these activities will be the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities.

V. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

19. The global programme is now limited to 5 programme categories compared to well above 40 in the fifth cycle. Operational guidelines for the programme have been developed that establish uniform mechanisms for programme development, monitoring, evaluation and funding.

20. Programme approval. An umbrella programme will be developed for each category. This mechanism will serve as a management tool for creating synergy and complementarity among specific programme activities and with the overall goals of the global programme. Project documents will be formulated within each major umbrella programme. Each project will be submitted for technical review and clearance to a bureau Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), to be convened by BPPS and to which representatives of the Regional Bureaux and other UNDP units will be invited.

21. In its decision 95/25, the Executive Board stressed the need to strengthen linkages between UNDP national programmes and relevant global, interregional and regional programmes in order to improve the impact of all these programmes. Coherence between all programmes will be ensured at the outset through annual joint work planning with the Regional Bureaux and direct linkage to the corporate work plan. Furthermore, the design, development and validation of global programme proposals will be undertaken in close collaboration with

Regional Bureaux through inter-bureau task forces, bureaux local funds and supported staff.

26. No funding will be provided for operational activities at the field level. Country-based interventions will occur only in response to country office request for support to programme development activities and for the pilot testing of new approaches and methodologies, which will be cleared by the Regional Bureaux.

27. Execution/monitoring. The GCP will be executed primarily by the United Nations Office for Project Services. Implementation will involve a wide range of partners, including Governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs. Particular efforts will be made to establish strategic partnerships and resource networks with institutions, think tanks, experts and academia to expand access to expertise, knowledge, new ideas and resources for programming purposes.

28. Substantial efforts will be made to improve the interactive monitoring of the global programme activities. A global programme management information system, linked to the financial information management system, will be set up to monitor and report on all global programmes to assure systematic congruence with overall objectives and quality controls.

29. Evaluation/impact assessment. All evaluations have stressed the need to introduce systematic procedures for impact assessment, benchmarking and success criteria which will assess progress towards the achievement of project objectives. To the extent possible, all project and programme proposals supported by the global programme will therefore be measured against indicators. However, given that indicators are lacking in certain areas, a primary objective of the programme will be to develop such indicators and benchmarks.

30. The global programme is also subject to the evaluation arrangements which govern all successor programme arrangements in Executive Board decision 95/1. Annual progress reports on each category will be provided by division directors to the Director of BPPS. In the third year, an independent evaluation of each category will be undertaken as part of the overall evaluation of the global programme, based on the quantifiable indicators of impact established in the programme documents. At that time, a progress report on the global programme will be presented to the Programme Management Oversight Committee. The report and recommendations will be presented to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1999. A full report of the evaluation of the global programme will be made available to the Executive Board as a conference room paper at the same session.

VI. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

31. In line with Executive Board decision 95/32, in which the Board calls for the Administrator to 'take measures to strengthen accountability and responsibility', it has been decided that the Bureau for Finance and Administration will assume responsibility for the management and oversight of programme finance functions in BPPS and all its funds and trust funds effective